

REMARKS

Claims 1-4, 7, 10, 12, 15, 17 and 20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by WO 02/21962 to West. Claims 1-7, 10, 12-15, 17 and 20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by US 6,928,734 to West. Claims 8, 16, and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over West (either '962 or '734) in view of JP 2119801. Claims 9 and 19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over West (either '962 or '734) in view of US 5,427,826 to Lida. Claim 11 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over West (either '962 or '734) in view of US Pre-Grant Pub. 2002/0166847 to Lacchitti, et al.

Neither of the West references show the use of a curved grinding surface to impart a curved profile to an annular blank. The Fig. 3 drawing of both West applications shows straight-cut facets. The abrasive stone was probably drawn freehand and has an uneven appearance. It is noteworthy that only the cylindrical center section of the stone is being used to create facets of planar cross-section. It will also be noted that there are no curved surfaces on any of the West rings. It seems that he is enamored with straight-cut facets—probably because they are simple to cut. The applicant believes that the West references are inappropriately cited to reject claim 1.

The Japanese patent reference of Tanigawa is also inapplicable to the present invention. Firstly, the Tanigawa reference shows a planar main body (1). It is also silent with regard to how the undercut is made. As the main body (1) is assumed to be made of conventional materials, such as a precious metal, it is likely that the undercut in the groove was made with a metal cutter. An expandable cutter head could easily cut the undercut on both walls of the groove simultaneously. For metal carbide composite jewelry, the use of a cutter is completely out of the question: the undercut must be ground. The present invention shows how such undercuts are ground—one at a time—on the walls of a circumferential groove on a metal carbide jewelry ring.

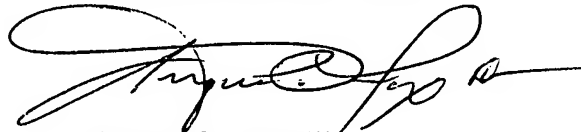
In view of the inapplicability of the Tanigawa reference, claim 10 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 16. Claim 16 has been canceled. Claim 17 has been amended to include the limitation of using a curved abrasive surface to shape the annular blank. The claim has been further amended to expand the coverage

to *at least one* annular groove. A new claim 21 has been added to specify one manner of fabricating an endless hoop.

It is believed that the drawings, the specification, and the claims, as amended, are now in a condition for allowance. Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

The foregoing amendment is believed to be a complete response to the outstanding Office Action.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Angus C. Fox, III", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Angus C. Fox, III

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